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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL SESSION

(29 September 1994)

1. In accordance with the provisions of paragraph 5 of Commission decision J (49) - ECE's contribution to the preparatory work for the Fourth World Conference on Women - which agreed that action to accredit non-governmental organizations without consultative status with ECOSOC should be taken by the Commission in June and September 1994, the Commission held a special session on 29 September 1994, subsequent to that already held on 22 June 1994. It was attended by representatives from Albania, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America. Representatives of the European Community and its Commission also participated in the meeting.

2. A representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) participated in the meeting.

3. The meeting was opened by the Chairman of the Commission, Ambassador Ludwik Dembinski (Poland).

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda

4. The Commission adopted its agenda as contained in document E/ECE/1308.

Item 2: Accreditation of NGOs without consultative status with ECOSOC to the ECE High-level Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Fourth World Conference on Women

5. The Chairman introduced the item by referring to the lists of NGOs contained in documents E/ECE/1306/Add.1 and 2.

6. The delegation of Greece indicated that it could not approve of the organization listed as Women's Organization of Macedonia, Skopje, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It stated however that it did not wish to delay approval of the rest of the organizations listed.

7. The delegation of Croatia gave its support for the list. In referring to the organizations mentioned in the Note to document E/ECE/1306/Add.1, it was of the view that these organizations should not be allowed to participate since the decisions of the General Assembly and ECOSOC concerning the non-participation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) in the work of ECE should apply mutatis mutandis to NGOs in that country.

8. The delegation of the Russian Federation stated that the participation of the NGOs in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) should be decided by the Committee on Sanctions as a matter of urgency. It saw no problem with their participation which it would welcome. The delegations of the Russian Federation and Sweden sought information about the criteria used by the secretariat in the selection process and the number of applications received.

9. The delegation of Cyprus expressed regret that NGOs from Cyprus had not bee included in the list and requested that they be given further consideration.

10. The delegation of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia indicated that the work and goals of the Women's Organization of Macedonia met the criteria for participation and urged the Commission not to take issue with the name used by the NGO. It noted that this was the only women's NGO in the country.

11. The delegation of Germany explained that the delegation of Greece spoke on its own behalf and not in the name of the European Union.

12. The secretariat explained that more than 500 NGOs not in consultative status with ECOSOC had applied to participate in the Regional Preparatory Meeting. A secretariat Task Force had been set up to screen applications using criteria established by the World Conference and certain criteria specific to the region. Applications were judged on the file they presented which had to give evidence of activity in a field relevant to the Meeting and in the ECE region.

13. The Chairman proposed that the list of NGOs contained in documents E/ECE/1306/Add.1 and 2 be adopted with the exception of the Women's Organization of Macedonia, for which further consultations would be held among interested parties. He also proposed to defer consideration of the three NGOs in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) until the legal opinion was received from UN Headquarters. It was so decided.

Item 3: Other business

14. There was no discussion under this item.